EFFECT OF GLOBALISATION ON INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to understand how the higher education system in India has been affected by globalization .It delves into the uniqueness of this tertiary sector as it exists in India and then takes a look at the challenges which globalization throws open for the Indian Higher Education .The challenges are manifold especially those posed by Privatization and Commercialization of Education, Increase in the cost of Education ,Poor Quality of Education, Increased inequity Coping with the value change that accompanies globalization etc. In order to deal with these changes effectively our education system will have to reinvent itself as globalization is a reality which cannot be undone .This paper finally offers suggestions to different stakeholders with respect to overcoming the challenges thrown up by globalization in the field of Indian Higher Education system.

KEYWORDS: Globalisation, Higher Education, Challenges.

Defining Globalisation:

Before making an attempt to understand the peculiarities of the Indian Higher Education System and the challenges which globalization throws open to it let us look at a few definitions of globalization given by experts in their respective fields.

Joseph Stiglitz a leading economist defines globalization as: "the closer integration of the countries and peoples of the world ...brought about by the enormous reduction of costs of transportation and communication, and the breaking down of artificial barriers to the flows of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and people across borders." (from Globalization and its discontents)

(source: www.mindtools.net/globCourse/gdef.html)

According to David Held et al. (1999) "Globalisation can be thought of as a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation of the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions."

(source:www.unesco.org/new/en/social-human-sciences/glossary/globalization)

Martin Albrow, 1990 defines it as "Globalisation refers to all those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society."

(source:www.unesco.org/new/en/social-human-sciences/glossary/globalization)

Anthony Giddens, (1990) defines it as "Globalisation can [...] be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa."

(source :www.unesco.org/new/en/social-human-sciences/glossary/globalization)

Robert Cox,(1994) states that "The characteristics of the globalisation trend include the internationalising of production, the new international division of labour, new migratory movements from South to North, the new competitive environment that accelerates these processes, and the internationalising of the state [...] making states into agencies of the globalizing world."

(source :www.unesco.org/new/en/social-human-sciences/glossary/globalization)

Now the next question which emerges is who paved the way for globalization and the answer to that is the General Agreement on Trades in Service (GATS) which was brought into force by the World Trade Organisation which lists education as one of the twelve service sectors .The 'purpose' of this GATS was to dissolve the boundaries between nations and promote an environment of free trade with respect to movement of people, ideas, technology etc. Before examining the challenges which globalization has brought along in India it is imperative to look at the Higher Education System in India.

Higher Education System in India:

According to the statistical data uploaded by the University Grants Commission(UGC) as on 5/7/2016 the total number of universities in India are 759 of which 350 are state universities,123 are deemed to be universities,47 are central universities and 239 are private universities. The total number of students enrolled in this tertiary sector as per the All India Survey of Higher Education(2011-12) based on the data collected in 2010-11 was 28.56 million students which accounts for a Gross Enrolment Ratio(GER) of 20.4 of students in the age group of 18-23 years.

(Statistics on Higher Education taken from UGC website as updated till 5.07.2016)

Although the govt is the largest stakeholder in Higher Education ,the role of the private sector is increasing by leaps and bounds every year. The private sector has a considerable presence in the areas of Engineering, Management, Medicine, Teacher Education etc

There is a wide disparity in the quality of education being given by different institutions of Higher learning across the country. On one hand we have the IITs, NITs, IIMs, AIIMS, PGIMER etc which match with the best institutions across the globe and are recognized for their quality education the world over and on the other hand we have a huge number of institutions which offer dismal quality of education. In the middle are the institutions which offer average or mediocre quality of education.

Apart from the universities offering on campus programmes in regular mode there is a large segment of students who earn while they learn and thus avail the benefits of the courses which are offered through the distance education mode.

There is no parity in terms of the evaluation system or academic structure too across the universities. Many conventional universities have still not moved towards the Choice Based Credit System and are running in the annual mode rather than embracing the semester mode.

The norms and standards in higher education in India are prescribed and accordingly institutions are regulated through a regulatory body for each sector. The umbrella body responsible for the maintenance of standards and laying down the norms ,rules and regulations for universities and colleges is the University Grants Commission. The Commission also awards grants, research fellowships etc to universities under different schemes .Apart from the UGC ,the different professional education domains are regulated by the following bodies respectively :Technical Education is regulated by the All India Council of Technical Education, Medicine/Medical Education is regulated by the Medical Council of India ,Agricultural Education, Extension Service and Research is monitored by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research ,The Pharmacy Sector is controlled by the Pharmacy Council of India, the nursing profession is under the Indian Nursing Council, Teacher Education is regulated by National Council of Teacher Education, The legal sector is controlled by the Bar Council of India, The Dental education is monitored by the Dental Council of India, Services related to Special Education are the responsibility of the Rehabilitation Council of India ,Architecture is under the purview of the Council of Architecture, Homeopathic Medicine is under the control of Central Council of Homeopathy and for Ayurvedic, Unani and Siddha schools of medicine there is Central Council for Indian Medicine which maintains standards. Apart from these regulatory bodies we have the Distance Education Council which is responsible for the distance education system including the open universities.

Challenges of Globalisation to the Indian Higher Education System:
Higher Cost of Education:
Post the Birla Ambani report submitted in the year 2000 on: 'A Policy Framework for Reforms in Education' the cost of higher education has gone sky rocketing. The report pitches Primary Education and Secondary Education against Higher

Education very clearly as per the quotes from the report placed below:

"Once we have largely achieved universal primary and secondary education, then we can consider higher education as a priority. There must be a concerted effort to free up resources for primary education."

"It will also imply a gradual move to full cost recovery in higher education giving the emergence of a largely self-financing private sector."

"Infrastructure for schools – buildings, telecom networks, and computers – have to be funded on a priority basis. The government can progressively reduce the funding for universities to achieve this. These universities should take the path of self-sufficiency through higher students' fees, donations and endowments, alumni contributions, linkages with corporate establishments for research, royalties on book and research output etc" (Birla Ambani Report,2000)

This emphasis on privatization of Higher Education has led to Education being perceived as a commodity being bought by those who can afford to pay for it thus making it a tool for the reproduction of the elite. A number of universities are now operating in the self financing mode making the fee structures of most the courses go beyond the reach of the lower income groups.

Making the System More Inequitable:
Due to the increase in the cost of education and the prevailing digital divide in the country the benefits of globalisation reach only the select few. We have created two Indias: One that is poor, illiterate, backward, without electricity and no access to ICT technologies etc and the other which is rich, educated ,has access to electricity and ICT technologies. This divide due to the inequitable distribution of resources has led to our commitment to principles of Justice and Equality as enshrined in the Constitution of India still being a far fetched dream.

Poor Quality of Education:
Privatisation of education has no doubt narrowed the gap between demand and supply and increased the access to education but the quality of education has suffered a serious dent. Owing to the market forces there has been a mushrooming of private institutions wherein the quality of education is dismal to say the least. This large scale privatization without assessing the demand in the market has led to commercialization of education and producing educated unemployed youth.

Survival of the Fittest:
Once the foreign universities establish their campuses on the Indian soil with the best of infrastructure ,highly qualified teachers, salaries at par with the best in the field the indigenous universities will have to really struggle to survive the competition. They will have only two choices either they reinvent themselves to survive the competition or perish. We need to gear up to this challenge, earlier the better.

Coping with Value Change:
With globalization there is a free exchange of ideas across cultures due to the barriers of communication being removed. With the materialistic culture already spreading its tentacles we are already observing a value change or a preference for a different set of values in the younger generation for eg respecting elders ,fostering bonds in families, helping each other, peaceful coexistence, being punctual etc are values which are losing their stronghold. Education including Higher Education will have to ensure that our socio-cultural values rooted in the Indian Ethos are not eroded.

Reinventing Higher Education:
In order to cater to the demand of multicultural education on account of globalization we shall have to reinvent our higher education institutions in ways such that we have diversity of languages from across the globe, we include the study of different world cultures and infuse curriculum transaction which is inherently interdisciplinary in nature. Multiculturalism has to blend in the curricula such that it fosters the values of peaceful coexistence ,tolerance and international understanding amongst all the teachers and students .This shall also entail meeting the challenge to train our academicians to brace up to the challenges of diversity in a multicultural classroom.

CONCLUSION:
Globalisation has no doubt opened up a window of opportunities of trade through increased access to ideas and technologies in particular but we as a developing economy need to take careful steps such that our Higher Education sector just does not become a free trade commodity in the market, being bought by those players who can offer the best price irrespective of the quality they offer. We cannot stop globalization as it is already there with all it's tentacles but we can at least put safeguards in place such that commercialization of education in the name of privatization does not flourish. In order to have sustain the impact of globalization on Indian Higher Education the following suggestions need to be pondered on :

a) We need research studies which throw light on the correlation between accreditation and improvement in the quality of Education.

b) We need to find ways and means to stop the mushrooming of substandard institutions which neither have infrastructure ,qualified faculty and are churning out students year after year without holding regular classes or proper evaluation.

c) No doubt globalization has made education a service good but does that mean that education operates on a business model fully compromising on the quality of education ,of course not. Quality needs to be ensured by hiring the best personnel in any field such that the student community paying a hefty fee in private institutions does not feel cheated.

d) Every university whether public or private needs to institute scholarships and free-ships for students belonging to the economically weaker sections to create a level playing field and an inclusive climate such that education does not become a tool of reproduction of the elite.

e) At present our higher education institutions are failing miserably in their efforts to inculcate values. Actually you hardly see any focus on values except for constant lip service on this burning issue.

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